

Insider Exclusive!

"James Earl Ray didn't kill Dr. Martin Luther King. And I can prove it, but state officials won't let me," says Renfro Turner Hays, a Memphis private detective.

"You got the police to prove they've looked up the wrong man in the state penitentiary of Nashville," said Hays, who worked for Ray's first attorney, Arthur Hanes of Birmingham, Ala.

"Not only that, but they've got the only living witness who knows Ray isn't the killer hidden away in a cell house as the man's talk to the press," he added.

This is what Hays told a **NATIONAL INSIDER** reporter in an exclusive copyrighted interview.

"It seems everyone wants to cover up the real story behind King's death," he said. "But not me. I'm going to tell what I know."

Hays told the woman who says Ray didn't kill King is a former member of the Lorraine Hotel.

That's where King spent his last living hours with his close friends, the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, now head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Rev. James Bevel, a Chicago civil rights leader.

Hays identified the woman as Grace Stevens.

"She saw the man who really killed King," said Hays.



Arthur Hanes, attorney for James Earl Ray, talks with Hays in front of the Shelby County Jail in Memphis. That's where Ray was kept pending his trial.

He spent in the rooming house on the fifth floor, but had a door shut off King.

"The police (king) in that hotel had a rooming house for about four years before the assassination," he said.

"Then, on March 15, a man by the name of Ray came to the rooming house. That's the day Ray went to a store in Birmingham and got a rifle," he said.

"And on that same day, he came by about noon. If that's the day Ray went to the store, he must have come the night before. I'm sure that's right. The day of the shooting, Ray was in the rooming house."

"Then, when Ray arrived in prison in Memphis, he didn't think he was going to the Lorraine Hotel," Hays went on. "King thought he was going to stay at the River House Hotel—that's where he had his rooming house."

"By the time King got back to Memphis his rooming house had been changed to the Lorraine and that's where the real game of hide-and-seek began."

"Ray witnesses to being hid in a hotel house."

"Ray was in the rooming house for a long time. But he was changed. He was moved upstairs and after that he was changed again."

"The room he finally lived in was in the first floor of the hotel, the room from which the sniper shot him down," Hays said.

"They made three separate rooms to get him in the hotel room," the detective said.

Hays said that the man had been a great deal of money placed on King to get him to return to Memphis and on a long to get him into the rooming house.

Hays also pointed out that the woman who was the first to see King's body, one of a guard, saw three white men leave King's body.

"I can prove that Ray did not kill Dr. King."

Miss Stevens has been a patient at Western State Mental Hospital in Dallas, Texas, since King was assassinated on a hot April morning in 1968.

"I picked her two years ago, eight after King was killed," Hays said.

"She had a picture of the man who killed King. It wasn't a picture of Ray either."

"Not only that, but I've got her statement describing the gunman, and I've got a witness to what was said in her room."

Hays identified the witness as a Dr. Ross Hoover, hospital psychiatrist, who in 1967 still is on the staff, at whether Miss Stevens is, or was, a patient at the institution.

"When I got through questioning her, I felt forced to me and said, 'My God, that's why they sent her up here. I know there was nothing in the world wrong with the woman,'" reported Hays.

Hays has raised some other rather curious questions regarding the investigation.

"There is a good deal of evidence to indicate that whoever killed King didn't get the job picked up," Hays added.

"Let's go back to the very beginning of King's life," he said.

"First of all, you've got to go back and look at the man you know, who is a picture of it."

"This picture of King was supposed to have been shot by a man in two pictures. Now this shot could only have been taken from